

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

IO-11 SAJ-01 SAM-01 BIB-01 CU-02 /082 W

----- 013399

R 151132Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1166

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 3866

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR

SUBJ: COMMEMORATION OF ZHDANOV'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

REF: (A) LENINGRAD 392, (B) MOSCOW 3722

1. SUMMARY. IN AN INTERESTING AND CONCEIVABLY HIGHLY
SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT A NUMBER OF ARTICLES LAUDING
ANDREY ZHDANOV -- WELL KNOWN AS STALIN'S RIGHTHAND MAN IN
THE POSTWAR PERIOD, AS A HARD-LINER IN DOMESTIC POLICY
AND A PREEMINENT COLD WARRIOR IN FOREIGN POLICY -- HAVE
RECENTLY APPEARED IN THE SOVIET PRESS ON THE OCCASION OF
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HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY. THE EFFECT OF THESE ARTICLES

IS TO WHITEWASH ZHDANOV AND THE POLICIES CONNECTED WITH HIM, AND BY IMPLICATION TO WHITEWASH CORRESPONDING ASPECTS OF POSTWAR STALINISM AS WELL. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IS EMPHASIS UPON CONTINUITY IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY FROM THE POST-WAR PERIOD TO THE PRESENT, WHICH SEEMS TO CONTRADICT THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET LINE THAT THE 20TH CONGRESS BROKE THE CONTINUITY OF THE STALINIST YEARS IN BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY. THIS MAY INDICATE THAT DOUBTS PERSIST AMONG IDEOLOGISTS AND PARTY APPARATCHIKS ABOUT THE DOCTRINAL LEGITIMACY OF THE PARTY'S PRESENT FOREIGN POLICY LINE, I.E. THE PEACE PROGRAM ASSOCIATED WITH BREZHNEV.

2. THIS MIGHT WELL BE AN ISOLATED CASE OF CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGUES, PROBABLY INCLUDING SUSLOV, SEIZING AN OPPORTUNITY TO SCORE SOME POINTS. ALTERNATIVELY, THE ARTICLES MAY REFLECT AN AGREED POLITBURO VIEW THAT THE POSTWAR PERIOD OF STALIN'S ROLE SHOULD BE RESTORED TO PROPER HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. END SUMMARY.

END CONFIDENTIAL, BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

3. IN ADDITION TO THE ARTICLE ON ZHDANOV IN LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (LENINGRAD 392), WE HAVE NOTED THREE ARTICLES ON ZHDANOV'S 80TH BIRTHDAY IN THE CENTRAL PRESS. THE FIRST APPEARED IN KOMMUNIST NO. 3, FEBRUARY 1976 (SIGNED TO PRESS FEBRUARY 11), THE SECOND ON THE BACK PAGE OF PRAVDA MARCH 10, AND THE THIRD ON THE BACK PAGE OF SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA MARCH 10. THE LATTER TWO ARTICLES WERE ACCOMPANIED BY A MEDIUM SIZED PHOTO OF THE LATE ZHDANOV. MOREOVER, PRAVDA OF MARCH 12 CARRIED A BRIEF TASS ITEM REPORTING A MARCH 11 MEETING AT THE CC'S INSTITUTE OF MARXISM-LENINISM DEVOTED TO THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF ZHDANOV'S BIRTH.

4. THE SIX AND ONE HALF PAGE ARTICLE IN KOMMUNIST, BY RECTOR OF THE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES M. IOVCHUK, SETS THE TONE FOR THE TWO SUBSEQUENT PIECES. IT HAS NOTHING BUT HIGH PRAISE FOR ZHDANOV AND HIS POLICIES: CONFIDENTIAL

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HE IS TERMED AN OUTSTANDING FIGURE OF THE CPSU AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, A PROMINENT MARXIST THEORIST, AND A STEADFAST FIGHTER AGAINST BOUREGOIS IDEOLOGY AND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALIST CULTURE.

5. AMONG HIS STERLING FEATURES, SAYS IOVCHUK, WERE HIS UNCOMPROMISING ATTITUDE TOWARD "BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY, OPPORTUNISM AND NARROW-MINDED, CREEPING EMPIRICISM;" HIS

EMPHASIS UPON STUDY OF MARX, ENGELS AND LENIN; AND HIS APPLICATION OF LENINIST IDEAS TO THE PARTY AS AN INSTITUTION AND TO ITS PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES.

6. IOVCHUK GIVES SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO ZHDANOV'S POSTWAR ACTIVITIES, NOTING THAT:

-- ALL WHO WORKED UNDER ZHDANOV'S LEADERSHIP DURING THE POSTWAR YEARS WELL REMEMBER HIS BOUNDLESS DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF COMMUNISM, HIS MARXIST SPIRIT AND ENCYCLOPEDIA KNOWLEDGE;

-- "IN THE COMPLEX CONDITIONS OF THE "COLD WAR", THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY, IN THE WORK OF WHICH A. ZHDANOV TOOK AN ACTIVE PART," CONFIDENTLY CONDUCTED A LINE OF CONSOLIDATING THE RESULTS OF THE WAR, ADVANCING THE SOCIALIST ECONOMY AND CULTURE, AND ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE COUNTRIES OF PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY AND THE UNITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.

-- "IN THE POST WAR CONDITIONS OF A SHARPENING STRUGGLE OF THE TWO IDEOLOGIES -- SOCIALIST AND BOURGEOIS -- IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA, THE QUESTION OF FURTHER RAISING THE IDEOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS OF SOVIET LITERATURE AND ART BECAME ACUTE. THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, WITH THE DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF A. ZHDANOV, ACTIVELY ADVANCED AGAINST MANIFESTATIONS OF ALIEN IDEOLOGY, FOR PARTIYNOST', FOR IDEOLOGICAL AND NATIONAL CONTENT IN SOVIET LITERATURE AND ART."

7. TURNING TO THE PRESENT DAY, IOVCHUK WRITES THAT "THE POLITICAL DOCUMENTS OF THE PARTY DURING THAT (POSTWAR) PERIOD HELP TO EXPLAIN A GREAT DEAL."
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SPECIFICALLY:

-- THE CONTINUITY OF THE LENINIST INTERNATIONAL POLICY OF THE CPSU AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS A GROWING INFLUENCE ON THE COURSE OF WORLD DEVELOPMENT;

-- THE SUCCESSES CURRENTLY ACHIEVED IN THE STRUGGLE TO AFFIRM THE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE;

-- AND "CONFIDENCE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF FRUSTRATING THE MILITARISTIC PLANS OF THE IMPERIALIST FORCES, AS WELL AS THEIR PLANS FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SUFFOCATION OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE TAKEN THE SOCIALIST PATH."

8. LEAFING THROUGH THESE PAGES FROM THE PAST, IOVCHUK CONTINUES, "WE ARE AGAIN CONVINCED HOW UNFOUNDED AND FALSE ARE THE ASSERTIONS OF THE ENEMIES OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE ABOUT THE SO-CALLED 'DISJUNCTIVE NATURE' OF THE PEACE PROGRAM AND THE COURSE DIRECTED TOWARD MAKING RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION IRREVERSIBLE, WHICH WAS WORKED OUT AND REALIZED BY THE CPSU CC AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT."

9. IOVCHUK CONCLUDES: "THE PARTY AND THE SOVIET PEOPLE ARE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD THAT AS A RESULT OF THE EFFORTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA BY THE CPSU CC, ITS POLITBURO HEADED BY COMRADE L. I. BREZHNEV, REALISTIC PRECONDITIONS ARE BEING CREATED FOR EXCLUDING WAR FROM THE LIFE OF MANKIND." FURTHER, "THE PARTY AND THE SOVIET PEOPLE PRESERVE AND ENLARGE UPON THE LENINIST TRADITIONS OF THE SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION OF OUR MOTHERLAND, OF STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM, GENUINE DEMOCRACY AND LASTING PEACE ON A WORLD SCALE, THE TRADITION OF FURTHER ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT AND IDEOLOGICAL ENRICHMENT OF ADVANCED SCIENCE AND SOCIALIST CULTURE. THESE TRADITIONS... ARE CURRENTLY BEING TRANSMITTED TO A NEW GENERATION OF SOVIET PEOPLE."

10. THE MARCH 10 ARTICLES IN PRAVDA AND SOVETSKAYA
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ROSSIYA, BY P. RODIONOV (FIRST DEPUTY DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OR MARXISM-LENINISM) AND A. YERSHOV (SENIOR SCIENTIFIC CONSULTANT, INSTITUTE OF MARXISM-LENINISM) RESPECTIVELY, TAKE THE SAME GENERAL LINE. BOTH SAY, IN ALMOST IDENTICAL PHRASING, THAT FROM THE 14TH PARTY CONGRESS ONWARD ZHDANOV BELONGED TO THE LEADING NUCLEUS OF THE PARTY WHICH, AFTER LENIN'S DEATH, UPHELD THE BANNER OF LENINISM, UNITED THE PARTY AND LED THE SOVIET PEOPLE TO THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM.

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IO-11 SAI-01 SAM-01 BIB-01 CU-02 /082 W

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R 151132Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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11. NONE OF THE THREE ARTICLES MENTIONS STALIN'S
NAME, OR SHEDS LIGHT ON THE MURKY CIRCUMSTANCES
OF ZHDANOV' DEATH.

12. WE DO NOT HAVE BACK ISSUES OF PRAVDA FOR 1966,
BUT OUR REFERENCE LIBRARY INDICATES THAT A MEETING,
ATTENDED BY POSPELOV, WAS HELD IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH
OF THAT YEAR TO COMMEMORATE ZHDANOV'S 70TH BIRTHDAY.
WE ASSUME THE MEETING WAS SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED IN
PRAVDA.

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13. COMMENT. THESE ARTICLES AMOUNT TO A VIRTUALLY
COMPLETE WHITEWASH OF ZHDANOV AND HIS POLICIES --
NOT BY GLOSSING OVER HIS HARD-LINE POSTWAR VIEWS, BUT
BY HIGHLIGHTING THEM. SINCE ZHDANOV IS WELL KNOWN
AS ONE OF STALIN'S CLOSEST LIEUTENANTS, THE
ARTICLES STRONGLY IMPLY A REHABILITATION OF STALIN'S

POSTWAR POLICIES IN THE FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC IDEOLOGICAL
FIELDS, AT LEAST TO THE TIME OF ZHDANOV'S DEATH IN 1948.

14. IN THIS REGARD, IT IS STRIKING THAT IOVCHUK
AND RODIONOV REFER TO POSTWAR SOVIET POLICY OF ZHDANOV'S
TIME AS HAVING STEMMED FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
AND POLITBURO (WHICH WERE OF COURSE DOMINATED BY
STALIN), WITH ZHDANOV AS SPOKESMAN OR IMPLEMENTOR.
THERE IS A NUANCE, HOWEVER: BY STRESSING THAT AFTER
LENIN'S ZHDANOV CONSISTENTLY UPHELD LENINISM,
PARTICULARLY IN PARTY WORK, THE AUTHORS MAY INTEND
TO IMPLY A DEGREE OF DISTANCE BETWEEN ZHDANOV AND
STALIN REGARDING LENINIST PRINCIPLES.

15. THE EMPHASIS ON CONTINUITY IN SOVIET FOREIGN
POLICY FROM THE EARLY POSTWAR PERIOD TO THE PRESENT
IS PREGNANT WITH IMPLICATIONS:

- IT SUGGESTS THAT SOME READERS OF KOMMUNIST
AND PRAVDA HAVE DOUBTS ON THIS SCORE;
- IT CONTRADICTS THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET LINE THAT
THE 20TH CONGRESS IN 1956 BROKE THE CONTINUITY OF THE
STALINIST YEARS IN BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY;
- AND IT IMPLIES THAT STALIN'S "CULT OF PERSONALITY"
DID NOT SERIOUSLY DISTORT SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY OF THAT
PERIOD.

16. THE TIMING OF THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND THE
COMMEMORATIVE MEETING, SOME TWO WEEKS AFTER ZHDANOV'S
FEBRUARY 26 BIRTHDAY, SUGGESTS A DECISION NOT TO PUBLISH
ARTICLES PRAISING HIM DURING THE 25TH CONGRESS (WHICH
BEGAN FEBRUARY 24). INDEED IT COULD HAVE BEEN
AWKWARD TO DO SO, BECAUSE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE TWENTIETH CONGRESS AND KHRUSHCHEV'S SECRET
SPEECH CONDEMNING STALIN ALSO COINCIDED WITH THE
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PERIOD OF THE 25 TH CONGRESS. ON THE OTHER HAND,
THE ISSUE OF KOMMUNIST CONTAINING IOVCHUK'S ARTICLE
REACHED US JUST AS THE 25TH CONGRESS OPENED. THERE
IS NO ARTICLE IN THAT ISSUE COMMEMORATING THE TWENTIETH
CONGRESS, ALTHOUGH THE UNSIGNED LEAD ARTICLE STATES
THAT "THE PARTY HAS CORRECTED THE MISTAKES CONNECTED
WITH THE CULT OF PERSONALITY AND WITH A SUBJECTIVE
APPROACH TO THE SOLUTION OF IMPORTANT ECONOMIC AND
POLITICAL PROBLEMS."

17. THESE ARTICLES SMELL OF SUSLOV. THE THREE AUTHORS
WORK IN ORGANIZATIONS WHICH ULTIMATELY COME UNDER HIS
SUPERVISION. SUSLOV APPARENTLY BEGAN HIS CAREER
IN THE CC SECRETARIAT IN 1946 UNDER ZHDANOV'S AUSPICES.

THE ARTICLES' HARD LINE ON FOREIGN POLICY, IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AND THE ARTS SEEMS TO ECHO SUSLOV'S VIEWS ON THESE TOPICS. TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE NUMEROUS PROMOTIONS OF PARTY OFFICIALS IN THE PROPAGANDA AND IDEOLOGY FIELD (MOSCOW 3722), THE COMMEMORATION OF ZHDANOV'S 80TH BIRTHDAY SUGGESTS AMONG OTHER THINGS THAT SUSLOV REMAINS A HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL FIGURE AMONG THE SENIOR OLIGARCHS.

18. THE INTRIGUING QUESTION IS WHETHER THIS GLORIFICATION OF ZHDANOV REPRESENTS A WIDELY SHARED VIEW WITHIN THE SENIOR PARTY LEADERSHIP OR IS THE RESULT OF SPECIAL PLEADING OR EVEN UNILATERAL ACTION BY SUSLOV AND OTHER IDEOLOGUES. THE EVIDENCE AT THIS POINT IS INCONCLUSIVE, ALTHOUGH SOME ASPECTS OF THE KOMMUNIST ARTICLE SEEM TO DEPART FROM THE USUAL BREZHNEV LINE. FOR EXAMPLE:

-- IOVCHUK'S REFERENCE TO THE PEACE PROGRAM LACKS THE STANDARD ACCOMPANYING MENTION OF BREZHNEV. THE SINGLE REFERENCE TO BREZHNEV AT THE END OF IOVCHUK'S ARTICLE SEEMS ALMOST AN AFTERTHOUGHT. THE PRAVDA AND SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA ARTICLES CONTAIN NO MENTION OF BREZHNEV;

-- AFTER LAUDING THE PARTY'S POSTWAR POLICY OF "PARTIYNOST', IDEYNOST', AND NARODNOST'" (PARTY, IDEOLOGICAL, AND NATIONAL SPIRIT) IN SOVIET LITERATURE

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AND ART, IOVCHUK ADDS THAT CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE USSR DECISIVELY DEMONSTRATES THAT SOCIALIST REALISM SPRINGS FROM THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE NEW ART AND HAS ALLOWED OUR ART TO REACH LOFTY HEIGHTS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE ENTIRE WORLD. IN CONTRAST, BREZHNEV'S REPORT TO THE 25TH CONGRESS MENTIONS SOCIALIST REALISM IN PASSING BUT ALSO NOTES THAT "IF SOME FUNCTIONARY HAPPENS TO TAKE THE OVERSIMPLIFIED APPROACH AND TRIES TO RESOLVE BY FIAT MATTERS RELATING TO AESTHETIC CREATIVITY AND DIVERSITY OF FORM AND INDIVIDUALITY OF STYLE, THE PARTY DOES NOT IGNORE SUCH CASES AND RECITIFIES THE SITUATION."

19. IN SUM, THESE ARTICLES ON ZHDANOV STRIKE US AS A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN AND OF THEMSELVES. THEY MAY REPRESENT AN ISOLATED CASE IN WHICH HARD-LINE IDEOLOGUES, PROBABLY INCLUDING SUSLOV, SEIZED UPON AN OPPORTUNITY (THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF ZHDANOV) TO ASSERT THEIR POINT OF VIEW. KOMMUNIST EDITOR AFANAS'YEV IMPLIED SOMETHING LIKE THIS

WHEN, AS PRESS SPOKESMAN FOR THE 25TH CONGRESS, HE WAS ASKED BY A WESTERN JOURNALIST (AT OUR PROMPTING) ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ZHDANOV ARTICLE IN HIS JOURNAL: AFANAS'YEV DISMISSED THE QUESTION BY SAYING THAT THE SOVIET UNION FREQUENTLY COMMEMORATES THE BIRTHDAYS OF SUCH PEOPLE. ALTERNATIVELY, THE ARTICLES MAY REFLECT AN AGREED POLITBURO VIEW THAT MUCH OF STALIN'S ACTIVITIES IN THE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR PERIOD WAS NOT AFFECTED BY THE CULT OF PERSONALITY AND SHOULD BE GRADUALLY RESTORED TO PROPER HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. OR THEY COULD SIGNAL DISAGREEMENT AT THE TOP OVER THE MERIT OF STALIN'S (AND ZHDANOV'S) HARD LINE OF THE EVILS OF "IMPERIALISM" AND ON THE NECESSITY FOR STRICT IDEOLOGICAL PURITY AND STAUNCH IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE. THUS THE ARTICLES INDICATE THAT THESE ASPECTS OF THE POLITICALLY-SENSITIVE QUESTION OF STALIN BEAR CAREFTUL WATCHING.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS, COMMUNISTS, PARTY LEADERS, COMMUNIST DOCTRINE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ullricre
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW03866
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760097-0196
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760360/aaaacbcj.tel
Line Count: 402
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LENINGRAD 392, 76 MOSCOW 3722
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ullricre
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <30 JUL 2004 by ullricre>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMEMORATION OF ZHDANOV'S 80TH BIRTHDAY
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, (ZHDANOV, ANDREY ALEKSANDROVICH)
To: STATE LENINGRAD
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006